

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 AEC-05 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-05 IO-04

L-01 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-03 PRS-01 SAJ-01

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FM USDEL MBFR VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0582

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0384

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: UK POSITION ON SOVIET FIRST STEP

1. LATE NOVEMBER 4, UK REP INFORMED US REP THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM LONDON TELLING HIM TO DELETE FROM PLENARY PRESENTATION HE IS SCHEDULED TO GIVE ON NOVEMBER 7 ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIES MATERIAL CRITICIZING THE SOVIET INITIAL STEP REDUCTION PROPOSAL. UK FONOFF INSTRUCTED UK REP NOT TO MAKE PRESENTATION WITH SUCH MATERIAL IN IT HIMSELF AND TO RESIST INCLUSION OF CRITICISM IN THE WESTERN PRESENTATION SHOULD ANOTHER ALLIED REP BE SELECTED TO MAKE THE PRESENTATION IN HIS PLACE. REASON GIVEN BY FONOFF WAS THAT EASTERN INITIAL STEP PROPOSAL WAS THE FIRST OFFICIAL GOVERNMENTAL PROPOSAL MADE IN MBFR NEGOTIATIONS SINCE NOVEMBER 8, 1973,

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AND ALLIED GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE TAKING

THE TIME TO GIVE IT SERIOUS STUDY BEFORE MAKING A
CONSIDERED REPLY.

2. BACKGROUND OF THIS ISSUE IS THAT, ON INSTRUCTION,
UK REP URGED IN AD HOC MEETING OF NOVEMBER 1 THAT
ALLIES SHOULD POSTPONE THEIR PLENARY REACTION TO
SOVIET INITIAL REDUCTION STEP PROPOSAL ADVANCED BY
KHLESTOV IN PLENARY ON OCTOBER 31 BY A WEEK OR TWO.
HOWEVER, UK REP WAS ISLOATED IN THIS OPINION. UNANIMOUS
VIEW OF ALL OTHER SPEAKERS IN AD HOC GROUP, CONFIRMED
BY CHAIRMAN AS GROUP CONSENSUS, WAS THAT EAST HAD
NOT PUT DOWN IN PLENARY THE PROPOSAL THAT IT HAD EARLIER
ADVANCED, THAT AD HOC GROUP HAD THOROUGHLY STUDIED
THIS PLAN AND ITS CONNOTATIONS AND HAD DEVELOPED
ADEQUATE RESPONSE AND THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO
SHOW HESITATION IN PRESENTING A PLENARY REPLY TO SOVIET
PRESENTATION OF OCTOBER 31. UK REP ACCEPTED CONSENSUS
OF GROUP AND PRESENTATION HAS BEEN PREPARED ALONG
THE LINES TAKEN BY ALLIED REPS IN INFORMAL SESSIONS ON
OCTOBER 15, 22 AND 29, SEPARATING THE SOVIET PROPOSAL
INTO POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS, ACKNOWLEDGING THE
POSITIVE ASPECTS AND REJECTING THE NEGATIVE ONES.

3. WHATEVER THE MOTIVATION UNDERLYING UK ACTION, IT
SEEMS TO US THAT FONOFF HAS CHOSEN THE WRONG VEHICLE
FOR IT IN URGING DELAY OF ALLIED PLENARY CRITICISM
OF SOVIET PROPOSAL. THE EAST WILL BE EXPECTING SUCH
A PRESENTATION AND WILL BE SURPRISED WHEN IT IS NOT
GIVEN. ALLIED REPS WILL BE CONFUSED BY UK BEHAVIOR,
WHICH WILL MARK FIRST BREAK IN ALLIED APPROACH ON
HOWEVER MINOR A MATTER IN PAST YEAR OF NEGOTIATION
AND WORD OF THIS WILL GET TO EAST. MOREOVER, OWING
TO EASTERNPRESS LEAKS, LOCAL PRESS REPRESENTATIVES
ARE AWARE THAT SOVIETS PUT FORWARD PROPOSAL ON
OCTOBER 31, WILL ASK ALLIED PRESS REPRESENTATIVE
FOLLOWING NOVEMBER 7 PLENARY WHETHER ALLIES REPLIED AND
MAY READ SOMETHING INTO IT IF ALLIES HAVE NOT RESPONDED.
ALL IN ALL, THE IMPRESSION WILL BE CREATED THAT THE
ALLIES ARE GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE
EASTERN PROPOSAL, AN IMPRESSION WHICH WILL DO DISSERVICE
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TO ALLIED TACTICAL POSITION.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST WASHINGTON AGENCIES
CALL IN REPRESENTATIVE OF UK EMBASSY TODAY,
NOVEMBER 5, AND REQUEST REVISION OF UK POSITION TO
CONFORM WITH CONSENSUS IN AD HOC GROUP. IT IS ESSENTIAL
THAT IF THIS IS DECIDED ON, IT BE DONE AS EARLY AS
POSSIBLE, SO THAT IF UK DOES DECIDE TO REVISE

ITS POSITION, UK REP CAN RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS IN VIENNA
BY NOON, NOVEMBER 6, ENABLING A CHANGE OF POSITION IN
TEXT TO BE PREPARED FOR PLENARY.

5. IN ADDITION TO POINTS MADE ABOVE, WASHINGTON
OFFICIALS MAY WISH TO DRAW ON FOLLOWING POINTS IN
THEIR DISCUSSION WITH UK OFFICIALS: SOVIET PROPOSAL
IS GENUINELY NOT NEW. IT WAS PUT FORWARD IN OUTLINE
IN MARCH AND IN ALMOST FINAL DETAIL IN JUNE. ALLIED
REPRESENTATIVES CRITICIZED THEM FROM THE BEGINNING FOR
WHAT THEY WERE: A VEHICLE TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE OF THE
EASTERN SYMBOLIC REDUCTION APPROACH. AT THE SAME TIME,
ALLIED REPS HAVE FROM OUTSET TAKEN ADEQUATE CARE TO
NOTE AND TRY TO BUILD ON THE POSITIVE ASPECTS
OF THE EASTERN POSITION. ALLIED REPRESENTATIVES WILL
HAVE DEALT WITH THE LATEST VERSION OF EASTERN PROPOSAL
ADVANCED ON OCTOBER 15 IN THREE SUCCESSIVE INFORMAL
SESSIONS INCLUDING THAT ON NOVEMBER 5. IT IS DOUBTFUL
THAT THE SOVIETS MAKE ANY LARGE DISTINCTION BETWEEN
PLENARY AND INFORMAL SESSIONS AND IT IS ASSUMED THAT THEY
HAVE ACCEPTED THE POSITION PUT FORWARD BY ALLIED
REPRESENTATIVES AS REPRESENTING THE VIEWS OF THEIR
GOVERNMENTS. HENCE, DELAY IN PLENARY RESPONSE WILL
ONLY RAISE QUESTIONS WITHOUT SERVING STATED UK PURPOSES.
AS FAR AS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DISCOVER, FIRST STEP
PROPOSAL WAS NOT RAISED BY SOVIET OFFICIALS EITHER
DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT OR VISIT OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT
WHICH DOES NOT INDICATE HIGH LEVEL INTEREST. THE EAST
IS BEGINNING TO MOUNT A DELIBERATE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN
BASED ON PRESS LEAKS ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL. INDICATIONS
OF WESTERN INDECISION IN THE FACE OF THIS CAMPAIGN WILL
ENCOURAGE THE EAST TO PERSIST AND MAKE IT CORRESPONDINGLY
MORE DIFFICULT FOR WEST TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE OF ITS APPROACH.

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IT IS POSSIBLE THAT UK IS INTERESTED IN EXPLORING POSSIBLE
USE OF SOVIET PROPOSAL IN CONTEXT OF ITS OWN IDEAS ON
MELDING PHASES I AND II. WE DO NOT AGREE WITH THIS IDEA, BUT
IN ANY EVENT BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED SEPARATELY
FROM TACTICAL HANDLING OF SOVIET PROPOSAL. RESOR

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